

Each of the audio manipulators 260-2, 260-3, ..., and 260-n extracts a motion related to the corresponding conference participant HM from the motion information, and manipulates the input sound of the corresponding conference participant HM so that the movement of the conference participant HM is intuitively easy to understand, as required, according to the extracted motion.

The manipulated sound is output from an output terminal 263 to the information distribution section 207.

In an example manipulation performed in each of the audio manipulators 260-2, 260-3, ..., and 260-n, a message such as "the seating order is being changed" and/or sound indicating a change of the seating order is superposed on sound when a conference participant HM located at a remote place relatively moves against the conference participant HM1 located on site. The message and/or sound is superposed, for example, until the time immediately before or immediately after a connection is changed by the information distribution section 207, described later.

In another example manipulation, a message such as "the seating order is being changed" and/or sound indicating a change of the seating order is superposed on sound irrespective of the motion of a conference participant HM located at a remote place. The message and/or sound is superposed, for example, until the time immediately before

or immediately after a connection is changed by the information distribution section 207, described later.

The connection determination section 204, shown in Fig. 30, determines a method for connecting images and sound to each monitor device MD according to the seating order information input from the input terminal 202, and sends it to the information distribution section 207 as connection information.

Fig. 33 shows the structure of the information distribution section 207. Images sent from the image manipulation device 205 through an input terminal 271, and sound input from the sound manipulation device 206 through an input terminal 272 are sent to a matrix switcher 270. The images and sound are sent to each monitor device MD so as to conform to the seating-order information, according to the connection information sent from the connection determination section 204 through an input terminal 273 to the matrix switcher 270. In other words, the matrix switcher 270 switches the images and sound to the output terminals T02 to T0n according to the connection information.

Since the information manipulation and distribution section PB has the above-described structure in the signal processing device SPD of each teleconference device TCD, a dynamic seating-order change is performed in the monitor devices MD2 to MDn according to the seating-order

information generated by the seating-order determination device GJD.

The relationships (seating order) between the monitor devices MD2 to MDn and conference participants HM2 to HMn shown thereon are flexibly changed according to conversation groups made and released during a conference such that a suitable condition is made for the conference participant HM1 to do conversation.

In the foregoing description, both images and sound are handled as information related to conference participants HM located at remote places. One of them may be handled as the information.

In the foregoing description, images and sound are manipulated. Input images and/or sound may be directly sent to the information distribution section 207 without being manipulated.

When a seating-order is frequently changed, a confusion may occur as to which conversation each conference participant is doing.

To avoid such a condition, when the seating-order determination device GJD determines a seating order according to group determination as described above, a process for making the background of each conference participant HM in the corresponding image have similarity in units of groups can be applied in image processing performed